



RItE Care: A good investment

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While the nation continues to struggle with a growing uninsured and under-insured population, our state -- Rhode Island -- has stood as a model in how to responsibly meet the health-care needs of its children and parents. RItE Care, created to assure that low-income women and children receive appropriate medical care at a critical time, has demonstrated the value of limited public investment and unlimited returns. Research clearly demonstrates the merit of early medical care and management, which has enabled those less fortunate (parents and children) to thrive and become active and productive participants in our society. All are enriched.

The success of RItE Care should not be ignored, or sacrificed. The Rhode Island General Assembly is considering a budget for the state's upcoming fiscal year. The budget will require hard choices, as our already frayed safety net is showing increasing signs of stress. Government programs should be scrutinized and accountability demanded, now and in the future. RItE Care, an extraordinary collaborative of state government, doctors, hospitals, and insurers, has met that test since its inception, over 15 years ago.

The General Assembly has historically recognized the importance of lending a helping hand to those most vulnerable. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services and all program participants have shown that confidence is well placed. We urge continued support of RItE Care -- for our children, for our state.

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The writer is president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island; this letter was also signed by Mark E. Reynolds, president of Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, and Newell E. Warde, executive director of the Rhode Island Medical Society.